

Climate Change and Leisure Committee
Wednesday, 2 July 2025

PART I

Croxley Common Moor Management Plan 2025-2030
ADE

1 Summary

- 1.1 New five-year management plan has been developed for Croxley Common Moor in Croxley Green.
- 1.2 The new plan contains management actions over the next five years from financial year 2025/26 until 2029/30. The detailed actions relate to habitat management, scrub management, wildlife surveys for biodiversity and improvements to public access and signage.
- 1.3 Officers are recommending that these plans are approved by the Climate Change, Leisure and Housing committee and adopted by the Council. Should the plans be approved, Officers will seek to implement the actions within the plans over the next five years. Work will be completed within existing budgets or subject to external funding.

2 Details

2.1 Plan development process

- 2.1.1 The plans were developed and produced by Countryside Management Service (CMS) part of Hertfordshire County Council, who commissioned by Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) to assist with the management of TRDC Open Space.
- 2.1.2 Public consultation on the management plans was carried out in two stages. An initial period of consultation was held to encourage residents, site users, Friends of Croxley Common Moor, Councillors and other interested parties to share ideas and thoughts on the management of the woodlands over the next five years.
- 2.1.3 Once draft plans had been completed, a second period of consultation was held to enable stakeholders to comment on draft versions of the plans. Minor amendments were made to the plans to produce the final version.

2.2 Consultation Process

- 2.2.1 The initial consultation was held for 4 weeks from the 8 July to 5 August 2024.
- 2.2.2 Public and stakeholder consultation, on the draft management plan, took place December 2024 / January 2025.
- 2.2.3 A summary of engagement responses are included in the plan under 7.4 and have been grouped under subheadings which include: Public access, Scrub control, Thistle control, Ragwort, Gazing, SSSI, Surveys, River Gade, Climate change, Funding, Site management, OPM, FoCCM, Plan formatting.

2.3 Aim and Objectives

- 2.3.1 The aim and objective of the management plan is to provide a valuable, welcoming green space for the community whilst ensuring the nationally important biodiversity features are protected and enhanced.
- 2.3.2 The key detailed actions relate to environmental management in accordance with the Higher-Level Stewardship, wildlife surveys for biodiversity and improvements to public access and signage, these include;
- Annual scrub control contract clearing 1/3 of 'triangle field'.
 - Grazing in line with site HLS agreement.
 - Work with partner organisations to maximise opportunities for wildlife surveys

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The officer recommendation is that the management plan for Croxley Common Moor is formally adopted by the Council.
- 3.2 Officers will then begin to implement the actions within the plans, subject to available funding where necessary.
- 3.3 If the plans are not approved by the committee, maintenance of the site will continue at a minimum level, but no additional improvements for biodiversity or public access will be undertaken.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed budgets. The proposals also relate to securing additional funding, as outlined within the report.
- 4.2 The recommendations in this report relate to the achievement of the following performance indicators for the Leisure and Natural Infrastructure Service Plan 2025-2028.
- 4.2.1 LNI04 - External Funding secured to support Leisure and Natural Infrastructure Projects and Activities.
- 4.2.2 LNI05 - Year on year increase in the area of land owned by Three Rivers District Council, being managed for biodiversity benefit.
- 4.3 The recommendations in this report relate to the achievement of the following Corporate Framework Objectives:
- 4.3.1 Sustainable Communities
- 4.3.2 Net Carbon Zero and Climate Resilient

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan includes an annual budget to maintain 13 sites with management plans, including the management of Croxley Common Moor. This is not sufficient to deliver the actions planned within the Management Plan as such the delivery of projects will be dependent on securing external funding which will need to be obtained in advance of projects proceeding.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 All proposed works and equipment will be tendered within the Council's constitution and Contract Procedure Rules, where required.
- 6.2 The preparation of this plan is being undertaken in order to support compliance with the Council's statutory obligations and its Corporate Framework and Priorities.
- 6.3 The Council has a duty to have regard to conserving and enhancing biodiversity under S40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This does not mean that the duty must be given greater weight than other matters and the Management Plan recommendations that are being presented within this report satisfy the duty, which is for the Council to 'have regard' when it exercises its functions.
- 6.4 Subject to the receipt of external funding, under the Council Constitution (as outlined in part 3, section 4.1.3 of the Council Constitution), Committee approval is required to enter into any contract above the value of £25,000.

7 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 7.1 An Impact Assessment has been completed for these Management Plans.
- 7.2 On the whole the new Management plans should have a positive impact on the accessibility of the site.
- 7.3 Funding will need to be sourced in order to make these improvements.

8 Staffing Implications

- 8.1 Delivering the Management Plan project and objectives as well as securing external funding in order to deliver these will be led by the Leisure and Natural Infrastructure Service.
- 8.2 In particular, it will require the time of the Leisure Assets Manager and the Principal Trees and Woodlands Officer.
- 8.3 Officers will also be working collaboratively and will require support and input from Officers in other services, including Regulatory Services, Property Services, Environmental Protection, Community Partnerships, Finance and Legal.

9 Environmental Implications

10 Community Safety Implications

- 10.1 None Specific

11 Public Health implications

- 11.1 Accessible, well-maintained parks and open spaces have never been more vital to the health and wellbeing of individuals. Being able to connect with wildlife has a positive impact on both the physical and mental health and wellbeing of individuals.

12 Customer Services Centre Implications

- 12.1 None Specific

13 Communications and Website Implications

- 13.1 The website will be kept updated with any relevant changes to the site, following the adoption and ongoing delivery of the Management Plan.
- 13.2 Good news stories will be circulated and shared via the Communications team, including across a range of social media channels.

14 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

- 14.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.
- 14.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Leisure & Natural Infrastructure service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
Actions within the Management Plans are not implemented due to a lack of resources	Reputational damage to the Council	Implementation of the plans is monitored and reported to highlight any issues at an early stage	* Tolerate	4

- 14.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Very Likely ----- Likelihood ----- Remote	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Very High 16
	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12
	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
	Impact Low -----> Unacceptable			

Impact Score

4 (Catastrophic)

3 (Critical)

2 (Significant)

1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

4 (Very Likely (≥80%))

3 (Likely (21-79%))

2 (Unlikely (6-20%))

1 (Remote (≤5%))

- 14.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

15 Recommendation

- 15.1 That the Climate Change & Leisure Committee:
- 15.2 Adopt the new five year Management Plan for Croxley Common Moor.
- 15.3 Give delegated authority to the Director of Finance to enter into a contract or funding agreement above the value of £25,000, subject to securing external funding to facilitate works to support the implementation of the Management Plans.
- 15.4 That public access to the report be immediate.

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Data Quality

Data sources:

Public Consultation

Data checked by:

Andrew Taylor – Projects Officer, Countryside Management Service (CMS)

Data rating: Tick

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	✓
3	High	

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

APPENDIX A: Croxley Common Moor Greenspace Action Plan 2025 - 2030